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PAKISTAN: President Bhutto has made his strongest pitch yet for recognition of Bangladesh.

In a speech broadcast to the nation on 29 March, Bhutto strongly reaffirmed his belief that recognition is in Pakistan's own interest. Bhutto hopes to marshal public opinion in favor of a more realistic attitude toward relations with Bangladesh. He is also seeking to increase third-country pressure on Dacca and New Delhi for some concessions on the repatriation of the 90,000 prisoners of war India still holds, and he may have some hope of influencing India and Bangladesh directly.

In the meantime, Indian Prime Minister Gandhi has sent a close adviser to Dacca. The press is speculating that this will lead to a major breakthrough on the prisoner issue. There is, however, no indication that Bangladesh is willing to change its demand that recognition must precede repatriation and that some prisoners must be tried for war crimes.

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TUNISIA: Former prime minister Bahi Ladgham has resigned his political posts in a possible move to make a bid for the presidency.

Ladgham, whose popularity in Tunisia rivals and may even exceed that of President Habib Bourguiba, was for more than 30 years Bourguiba's loyal lieutenant. He was long considered the President's heir apparent. This relationship apparently ended, however, when Bourguiba publicly criticized his handling of a former economic minister, who was subsequently sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for high treason. Last week Bourguiba reviewed the subject and again rebuked Ladgham publicly, at which point Ladgham formally withdrew from the national assembly and his party's central committee.

Ladgham apparently considered that this strong reaction against the criticism could maintain his reputation as a plausible alternative to Bourguiba's chosen successor when the President's term expires in November 1974, or should he die in office. [redacted]

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